

Christ's Church: Methodist and Presbyterian United  
412 Clay St. W.  
Monmouth, OR 97361  
April 9, 2024

Dear Homeless Alliance Board Members,

I write in support of the efforts of Church at the Park to serve families and vulnerable adults with ties to rural Polk County who are experiencing homelessness. We do see a growing need in our area to meet the needs of these people for transitional-focused emergency shelter. We agree that it is better to work proactively to ease these needs, rather than to wait until the problem becomes overwhelming in our communities.

My congregation was one of the first entities to consider offering a possible solution. Unfortunately, it didn't work out for us to provide space for such a shelter, due to the opposition of people in our neighborhood and some of our members. However, I deeply respect the passion, concern, and efforts the people of Church at the Park are making to try to ease this need. I find it regrettable that a year after our initial look at their work, they are still trying to establish suitable sites for this kind of shelter.

I believe that Church at the Park has made an effort to address concerns and revise their plans in order to make these shelters more desirable for the places where they will be located, and they will continue to do so.

It saddens me to see signs in opposition to these shelters that call for maintaining the safety of our communities by keeping these shelters out. I believe that they will improve safety, and they will make it easier both for meeting the needs of the people served and for emergency services personnel to respond to needs, both in the shelters and those who are not in those shelters. I believe that our medical and emergency service providers will be less overwhelmed as people are given shelter and food, along with meeting other needs, that will allow them to make progress toward more permanent housing.

I and several members of our congregation will do what we are able to do to help Church at the Park carry out the services they plan to provide the people served in these shelters.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this work. I hope the Homeless Alliance will support the efforts of Church at the Park to serve those in need in our County.

Sincerely,  
Rev. Steve Mitchell, Pastor